EDITORIAL NOTE

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In the spring of 1917 the Foreign Office, in connexion with the preparation which they were making for the work of the Peace Conference, established a special section whose duty it should be to provide the British Delegates to the Peace Conference with information in the most convenient form—geographical, economic, historical, social, religious, and political—respecting the different countries, districts, islands, &c., with which they might have to deal. In addition, volumes were prepared on certain general subjects, mostly of an historical nature, concerning which it appeared that a special study would be useful.

The historical information was compiled by trained writers on historical subjects, who (in most cases) gave their services without any remuneration. For the geographical sections valuable assistance was given by the Intelligence Division (Naval Staff) of the Admiralty; and for the economic sections, by the War Trade Intelligence Department, which had been established by the Foreign Office. Of the maps accompanying the series, some were prepared by the above-mentioned department of the Admiralty, but the bulk of them were the work of the Geographical Section of the General Staff (Military Intelligence Division) of the War Office.

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Now that the Conference has nearly completed its task, the Foreign Office, in response to numerous inquiries and requests, has decided to issue the books for public use, believing that they will be useful to students of history, politics, economics, and foreign affairs, to publicists generally and to business men and travellers. It is hardly necessary to say that some of the subjects dealt with in the series have not in fact come under discussion at the Peace Conference; but, as the books treating of them contain valuable information, it has been thought advisable to include them.

121 It must be understood that, although the series of volumes was prepared under the authority, and is now issued with the sanction, of the Foreign Office, that Office is not to be regarded as guaranteeing the accuracy of every statement which they contain or as identifying itself with all the opinions expressed in the several volumes; the books were not prepared in the Foreign Office itself, but are in the nature of information provided for the Foreign Office and the British Delegation.

The books are now published, with a few exceptions, substantially as they were issued for the use of the Delegates. No attempt has been made to bring them up to date, for, in the first place, such a process would have entailed a great loss of time and a prohibitive expense; and, in the second, the political and other conditions of a great part of Europe and of the Nearer and Middle East are still unsettled and in such a state of flux that any attempt to describe them would have been incorrect or misleading. The books are therefore to be taken as describing, in general, *ante-bellum* conditions, though in a few cases, where it seemed specially desirable, the account has been brought down to a later date.

G. W. PROTHERO,

General Editor and formerly
Director of the Historical Section.

January 1920.

Preface

121 Though the Caucasus lies so near to Europe that some geographers are inclined to consider it as belonging to that continent rather than to Asia, nevertheless it remains one of the least known lands of the world. The Caucasus is indeed so near and yet so far away!

One need not be a prophet to realize that someday at least a partial solution to many an ethnological problem will be found in this rugged country, which has played an extremely important part in prehistoric times. Caucasia was a corridor between Europe and Asia during the migrations of ancient peoples. It was also a place of refuge for the weaker tribes. The Caucasus Mountains have preserved for us ancient cultures, which may throw great light upon such problems as the origin of pastoral and agrarian economies. Perhaps even the Assyriologist and other scholars interested in ancient codes of laws of the Near East may find an explanation to some of their problems in the customary laws of the Caucasian mountaineers. The great cultural similarity between the ancient Indo-Europeans and the Caucasians may help to solve some of the complicated problems connected with the Indo-Europeans. The study of Caucasian culture is of far greater importance than is generally realized.

Unfortunately, Western European and American ethnologists have neglected the Caucasus. This is a deplorable fact because the ancient, genuinely Caucasian culture, once so well preserved in the isolated villages of rugged Caucasus, is rapidly vanishing: Caucasians are ceasing to be Caucasians and becoming more and more like the Europeans, their powerful neighbours. They are becoming "civilized," but their culture, their genuinely Caucasian culture, is vanishing from life, memory, and science.

The present work is a comparative study of the Caucasian social life and is focused primarily on the mountain peoples living on the northern slopes of the Caucasus: the Abkhaz, the Cherkess, the Chechens, and the numerous peoples and tribes living in the mountains of Daghestan, the so-called "Lesghians."* Nevertheless, to complete our comparison, we shall also briefly sketch the marriage and family observances of the neighbouring peoples: the South Caucasian tribes, the Turco-Mongols, and the Ossetes. The description of the neighbouring peoples, however, will necessarily be brief and at times incomplete, the aim being merely to better understand the *North* Caucasians, to show the possible direction of cultural currents, to help trace the history of the North Caucasian marriage and family, to help interpret the marriage and family customs of North Caucasia. We shall limit our treatise as far as possible to the *juridical* character of marriage and the family, while other aspects will

* Strictly speaking, only the Kurins are Lesghians. However, the term is so universally used by authors for the entire group of Proto-Caucasians living in Daghestan that it would be inadvisable to introduce a new term.

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121 be considered only in as far as they are deemed necessary or useful for our historical reconstructions and economic, social, and religious interpretations. In a word, *the aim of this book is to trace the history of North Caucasian marriage and family law from the present to prehistorical times.*

By "family" we understand the individual (biological) family. Though a study of the joint-family organization be very profitable, it would lead us too far afield and more than double the size of the present work. Consequently, such questions as inheritance laws and the many questions regarding kinship are only slightly touched upon.

Since Caucasology is still in its infancy, we cannot expect such certitude from a study like this as we might rightly expect, for example, from a treatise on the American Indian. Nevertheless, the Caucasologist interested in the history and interpretation of the marriage and family law of the mountaineers has, even now, sufficient data to reach safe hypothetical conclusions and in not a few questions complete certitude. Where certitude is impossible he must strive after probability; where probability is unattainable he must be satisfied with mere possibility, and even, at times, with the consciousness of the existence of problems.

Some of the matter included in the present work may at first sight appear extraneous, perfectly known to the Caucasologist, and therefore unnecessary. But since this is the first strictly ethnological study on the Caucasians ever to appear in the English language, we deem it advisable to include "A General Introduction to the Study of Caucasian Culture" with such sections as "The Peoples and Tribes of Caucasia," "General Historical Conspectus of Ethnographical Data about the Caucasus," "Liguistics," etc. We hope that the extensive bibliography at the end of this work will prove of some value to the student of Caucasian culture. With this imperfect work we hope, if not actually to *open* a new, vast, and important field of research for the English-speaking ethnologist, at least *to call his attention to it.*

000 The present study would have been impossible if it had not been for the courteous cooperation of the staff of the London Library (St. James's Square) and especially of the Secretary and Librarian C. J. Purnell, M. A., to whom I wish to express my sincerest thanks. I am also greatly indebted to my teachers at the Universities of Fribourg and Vienna, Professors Wilhelm Schmidt, S.V.D., R. Bleichsteiner, Mr. and Mrs. F. Hančar. D. Wölfel, and J. Haekel for their useful suggestions. I alone, however, am responsible for the opinions expressed in the present work and for the criticism of authors. I owe a very special word of thanks to Professor Wilhelm Schmidt, for it is he who is most responsible for my interest in the Caucasian tribes and their culture. To Professor Joseph Henninger, S.V.D. I am grateful for the assistance given me in Arabic and in Islamic law. To this list must be added the names of the Reverend D. Walsh, S.V.D. and Miss Olive Forster, who read my manuscript and are responsible for not a few deletions and additions. Finally, to the Anthropos Institute I am grateful for publishing my work in the *Studia Instituti Anthropos.*

Techny, Illinois, December, 1950. L. J. L.

1 [sic--Analyst]

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113 (5) I. Pul'ner, "Itogi i zadači izučenija kavkazskich (gruzinskich i gorskich) evreev" ("Results and Problems of the Study of Georgian and Mountain Jews of the Caucasus"), *Sovetskaja Etnografija*, 1936, No. 4—5, pp. 105—121. This is an excellent bibliography on the Jews of Caucasia.

(6) E. Pčelina, "Ossetica". (A bibliographical index of literature on Ossetia), *Učenye zapiski Instituta etničeskich i nacional'nych kul'tur Vostoka*, 1930, Tome II, pp. 169—232.

(7) D. H. Egorova, "Bibliografija Vostoka" ("A Bibliography of the East"), Moscow, 1928, 22 pages.

(8) G. Nioradze, "*Begräbnis und Totenkultus bei den Chewsuren*," Stuttgart, 1931, pp. 53—57, for an easily available bibliography on the Khevsurs.

(9) The *Sovetskaja Etnografija*, 1936, No. 4—5, has an extensive bibliography of bibliographies (pp. 230—267). It covers all bibliographies published in pre-Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary times up to 1936. Very valuable is the large list of 76 Russian periodicals devoted to Caucasology either exclusively or at least frequently carrying articles on the Caucasus (pp. 268—270). Most of these periodicals are no longer published and are extremely rare, nor are they necessarily ethnographic in character. This issue contains a report on the ethnography of Armenia since the Revolution: St. Lisician, "Armjanskaja etnografija za 15 let" (pp. 270—274). On page 274—277 we find E. G. Kagarov's "bibliography of foreign (i. e., non-Russian) ethnographical literature on the Caucasus published in the last 10 years" ("Inostrannaja literatura po etnografii Kavkaza za poslednie 10 let"). This same issue contains a survey of ethnographical and archaeological literature published from 1932 to 1935: B. E. Degen-Kovalevskij, "Obzor literatury po ethnografii i archeologii Kavkaza za tri goda," pp. 277—303.

(10) J. F. Baddeley, *Index Caucasicus*, a subject index based mainly on pre-Soviet periodicals. The *Index Caucasicus* is still in manuscript form, kept at the London Library (St. James's Sq.). Baddeley has a twelve-page bibliography, in his easily available *The Rugged Flanks of Caucasus*.

(11) For a short but good linguistical bibliography see R. Bleichsteiner, "Die kaukasische Sprachgruppe," *Anthropos* XXXI (1937), pp. 61—74.

(12) For a bibliography of works on the physical anthropology of the Caucasus see A. Djawachischwili, "Die Rassenzusammensetzung der Kaukasusvölker," *Archiv für Anthropologie*, New Series, XX (1925), p. 89.

(13) For the best and most recent works on paleoanthropology (regarding peoples of entire U.S.S.R.) see D. F. Debec, *Paleoantropologija SSSR.*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1948.

(14) For an excellent bibliography of the prehistory of Caucasia see F. Hančar's *Urgeschichte Kaukasiens*, pp. 10—26.

3. Criticism of Sources

127 [121] In our attempt to describe the North Caucasian marriage and family we shall have recourse especially to the literature of *pre-Soviet* times. And rightly so! Our aim is not to portray the culture of the very last hour but to get as far back into the history of the North Caucasian family as possible. This can be